



Graduate Apprenticeship BA Early Learning & Childcare

Additional information for prospective employer partners

Who is this programme for?

The framework for this programme has been developed by Skills Development Scotland and enables both new entrants and those already employed in the early years sector to achieve a relevant degree and gain practitioner status within three years (Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be considered for relevant previous qualifications on an individual basis).

What is the formal qualification the apprentice achieves?

BA in Early Learning and Childcare (SCQF Level 9), awarded by the University of the Highland and Islands. Completion of the programme will also enable registration as a Practitioner with SSSC.

Will the apprentices need to be employed?

Yes. Apprentices must be employed for the duration of the programme, and the employer will be responsible for following their normal recruitment and employment practices/policies as with any other member of staff (including organisation induction, the provision of necessary on-the job training and support, and the appropriate management and supervision required to enable them to undertake their duties in the workplace).

In order to ensure adequate time within the workplace to apply learning and develop competency across the range of programme areas it is a minimum requirement set by SDS that apprentices are employed no less than 21 hours per week.

It will be a requirement for the university to be involved in the employer's recruitment process to provide guidance and ensure that any candidates meet the programme criteria and demonstrate the required capability to achieve the academic requirements.

What about status: included in ratio or supernumerary?

Whilst it is up to employers to decide on employment arrangements, it is recommended that apprentices will not be supernumerary and should be included as part of your ratio. Apprentices will register with SSSC as a practitioner at the beginning of the programme as with any other new employee working towards this status.

Apprentices entering this programme who are new entrants to the sector are likely to have limited previous experience or qualifications relevant to an early learning and childcare setting, so will need to be supported in the workplace appropriately. It is recommended that apprentices in these circumstances be viewed as a Support Worker for the first year of the programme, or at least until the employer is comfortable that the apprentice has developed the necessary competence and experience to work unsupervised.



How much should the apprentices be paid?

There is no stipulation from SDS or the university as to the level of salary that should be paid to apprentices, except that employment law/minimum wage regulations are followed. It is for the employer to determine the salary level, which will usually be set based on a combination of affordability, payment structure of the organisation and comparison to other posts, and the need to attract candidates within a competitive labour market with the capability and motivation to succeed in the workplace and achieve the academic degree programme requirements.

How is the Graduate Apprenticeship training funded?

All training delivery costs for this programme are funded by Skills Development Scotland. The university receives this funding directly. However, it will be the responsibility of the employer to cover the costs of employment, and also any required travel and accommodation costs associated with undertaking the programme. The employer may also offer some assistance towards the cost of books for the course.

What is expected from the employer with regard to the academic and assessment requirements of this programme?

Whilst all academic learning and assessment is the responsibility of the university, the employer's role in supporting this is essential, and will include:

- Employing the apprentices for the duration of the three year programme
- Signing a tripartite agreement that sets out responsibilities and expectations of all parties
- Providing a job role and work environment that provides the required level, breadth, and progression opportunities to meet the academic requirements of the programme
- Ensuring the apprentice is given the necessary time and support within the workplace to reflect on and apply their academic learning, and to gather evidence and develop competence in line with the apprentice's Personal Development Plan.
- Enabling the apprentice to attend university one day per week during academic term time to access academic learning and support with their tutor/assessor.
- Providing a suitable work-place mentor who has the ability, resource and influence within the organisation to enable the requirements listed above and also:
 - be a first point of contact within the workplace for both university and apprentice
 - provide apprentices with any other required opportunities to gain the type of experience in the workplace that will support their learning and skills acquisition
 - liaise with the university on the development, implementation and review of the apprentice's personal learning plan
 - take responsibility for overcoming any workplace challenges relating to the programme

How will the learning and assessment elements of the programme work in practice?

The BA in Early Learning and Childcare is made up of three levels (SCQF levels 7, 8 and 9), each being studied in an academic year. Within each academic year apprentices will complete five core modules which they must be passed before they can progress to the next level.

The modules have been carefully designed to reflect the developing competencies of the apprentice as they progress in conjunction with their developing professional practice. For example, in first year apprentices are asked to '**describe**' and '**identify**', in second year to '**evaluate**' and '**reflect**', and in third year to '**critically analyse**'. As apprentices progress they are expected to expand their skills and knowledge as well as display more depth and breadth in their written assessments and practical competencies.

The opportunity to engage in work-based learning alongside academic study enables the apprentice to explore themes of learning. Some themes will be explicit within the core modules and others will be recurrent professional themes apprentices will encounter in their everyday professional practice.

Apprentices will be observed in practice twice each year by a university assessor. The first observation will be a formative assessment, followed by an evaluation involving the apprentice, work-based mentor and assessor. The second observation will be a summative assessment, followed by a 360 Review involving the apprentice, work based mentor, assessor, colleagues, children and parents.

Apprentices will be expected to attend university one day a week during term time, which may be face-to-face or online through video conference. This will enable assessors/module tutors to engage apprentices in professional dialogue around themes emerging from the modules and workplace.

What is the role of the Work Based Mentor?

The work base mentor plays a critical role in ensuring a fair, consistent and meaningful learning experience within the workplace for the apprentice and should be identified by the employer based on their suitability to support the apprentice in this regard. UHI will provide an induction to support the employer and mentor in understanding their role and regular meetings will be held throughout the year. Mentors will also receive ongoing support through access to a dedicated interactive online space within the university's virtual learning environment (VLE).

The workplace mentor will be expected meet with the apprentice on a regular basis and support their learning by ensuring they are exposed to a variety of roles and responsibilities, increasing with experience and progression. The mentor will also input into the Personal Learning Plan and ensure the apprentice has time each week to carry out academic studies and attend university as required.

I would like to employ a graduate apprentice on this pilot programme. What do I do next?

The allocation of places for this programme will need to be completed by **31st March, 2020**, with all apprentices being in employment and registered onto the programme no later than **31st August, 2020**.

If you are able to recruit within this timescale, please contact Programme Leader Alice Mongiello and a member of the team will get in touch. You then will be asked to complete a formal note of interest form no later than **28th February**. Initial steps will include ensuring the job role and work environment will support the academic requirements of the programme prior to any further action.

For further information please contact:

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GA Programme Structure: An Overview

The development of the Graduate Apprenticeship BA Early Learning and Childcare (GA BA ELC) has been informed by the following 5 key principles:

Personal development in a professional context

Apprentices will be in employment in a range of ELC contexts. It is vital that the GA BA ELC enables them to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes to allow them to become professional and competent practitioners in their work context.

Relevance and Work-based learning

The content of the modules are grounded in work-based learning. Apprentices will be encouraged to identify the implications of theoretical perspectives for their workplace and enabled not only to relate the conceptual frameworks to issues of genuine concern for their own practice, but also increasingly to see how such frameworks can be generalised to the wider ELC contexts.

A Reflexive approach

A reflexive approach is an integral component of the GA BA ELC programme. Reflexivity is not just something an apprentice will do, but rather focuses their attention on who they are and how they relate to others. It encourages apprentices to think critically about their responsibility as a developing ELC professional and the relationship between theory and practice. It focuses their attention on what they take for granted and to think carefully about who is affected by their actions and what their moral responsibilities are in relation to their fellow colleagues, children and families in their care (Cunliffe 2014).

An evidence-based approach.

Apprentices will develop knowledge, understanding, and generic cognitive skills to underpin a critical, reflexive, and evidence-based approach. Evidence from a range of sources will be used. These will include evidence based on individual work-based learning, empirical and theoretical evidence from subject areas relevant to the GA BA ELC, and professionally focused empirical and theoretical evidence.

A Human Rights perspective.

Working with children in a range of ELC contexts requires apprentices to take an ethical, values-based approach to their work. This perspective will permeate all modules. Apprentices will be encouraged to question their own value positions and consider the value positions of others; this lies at the heart of a reflexive approach.

The GA BA ELC is centred on active and collaborative learning experiences for apprentices via supported on-line learning. Through UHI's VLE, apprentices will benefit from a variety of creative and interactive pedagogic approaches that facilitate connections between theory, policy, legislation and work-based practice. The development of knowledge, understanding, and the practical application of this will be a central feature of the GA BA in ELC. Utilising this approach ensures equivalency for all apprentices no matter what their geographical area or availability.



The GA BA ELC modules are outlined in the table below:

Semester 1 September – December	Semester 2 January – June
Year 1 (Level 7)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Developing Child (UL507187) • Promoting Children’s Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding (UL507185) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Learning: Play and Pedagogy (UL507187) • Childhood and Society (UL507187)
Supporting Practice Through a Reflexive Approach (40 credits) (UL507186)	
Year 2 (Level 8)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Relationships and Reflective Practice (UL508423) • Enhancing Quality in ELC (UL508421) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the Professional Self (UL508420) • The Enquiring Practitioner (UL508424)
Implementing Practice Through a Reflexive Approach (40 credits) (UL508422)	
Year 3 (Level 9)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review in ELC (UL509792) <p>Option (one from the following list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and Enhancing Parenting (UL909661) • Working in Partnership (UL708479) • Providing Curriculum for Life (UL908427) • Care and Control (UL508318) • Recognising and Challenging Discrimination and Disadvantage (UL308478) • Play and Childhood (UC808418) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary Perspectives in ELC (UL509790) • A Children’s Rights Perspective (UL509789)
Leading Practice Through a Reflexive Approach (40 credits) (UL509791)	